

# AUTOMATED LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS: A NEW TOOL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH?

S. Blair Kauffman\*

I. INTRODUCTION .....	234
II. STATUTORY RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS .....	235
A. Overview of Available Systems .....	235
1. State Legislatures .....	236
2. Congress .....	238
3. Commercial Systems .....	239
B. Government and Commercial Systems Compared .....	240
1. Database Coverage .....	241
2. Access Policies .....	241
III. BILL STATUS SYSTEMS .....	242
A. Overview of Available Systems .....	242
1. State Legislatures .....	244
a. Florida .....	244
b. Illinois .....	246
2. Congress .....	248
3. Commercial Systems .....	249
a. Legi-slate .....	249
b. Electronic Legislative Search System (ELSS) .....	249
c. Other Commercial Systems .....	250
B. Government and Commercial Systems Compared .....	251
IV. ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION ISSUES .....	252
A. Balancing Conflicting Interests .....	252
B. Other Issues .....	253
1. Freedom of Information .....	253
2. Quality of Service and Equal Access .....	254
3. Security .....	255
V. CONCLUSION .....	255
APPENDIX 1: State Legislatures That Have Automated Information Systems .....	257
APPENDIX 2: State Legislatures' Direct Access Policies .....	258
APPENDIX 3: States Which Will Perform Searches for Outside Users .....	259
APPENDIX 4: State Legislative Information Systems Contacts .....	260

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past fifty years the American legal system has changed from a system dominated by case law to a system dominated by legislation.<sup>1</sup> The expanding role that legislation has assumed is apparent, not only by the scholarly commentary precipitated by this change, but also by the new legislative research tools which have become commonplace in many law libraries. Well-established legal publishers and newer entrepreneurs are offering an array of computer-based systems that the researcher can use for searching legislative histories and pending and enacted legislation. For instance, with the computer-based products of Congressional Information Service, the Congressional Quarterly, and other services, the researcher can compile federal legislative histories more quickly than with manual tools. Moreover, researchers can perform online searches of pending legislation for a multitude of jurisdictions on the bill status and tracking systems such as the systems offered by Commerce Clearing House and Public Affairs Information.<sup>2</sup> In addition, a few codified statutes can be searched online using LEXIS or WESTLAW.<sup>3</sup>

These computer-based systems are a boon to the legislative researcher. Commercial systems have several drawbacks, however. First, these systems are expensive. Retrieving bill status information, for instance, costs nearly \$200 per hour. Second, the database of a commercial system may not cover the information that the researcher seeks. For example, no commercial system includes state statutes to a significant extent, and commercial bill tracking systems cover bills on only a limited number of topics. Therefore, the researcher should consider government-supported legislative information systems as alternative research tools.

The U.S. Congress and most state legislatures have computerized information systems which often include more comprehensive and current statute and bill status files than corresponding commercial systems.<sup>4</sup> Legislatures developed these legislative information systems over the past twenty-five years in an effort to cope with growing work loads. Generally, legislatures that began to use computers for one function, such as bill drafting, expanded their uses of computer technology. Thus, a computer database originally created for bill drafting led to the creation of additional files for current bill status information and statutory retrieval; the legislature then used these files for the electronic phototypesetting of various

---

\* Law Library Director and Assistant Professor of Law, Northern Illinois University College of Law, DeKalb, Illinois.

1. A recent study, covering a decade of reported cases in Illinois, found that the courts cited state statutes as authority 75% of the time but cited common law rules in only 5% of the cases. Fins, *Historical and Structural Analysis of the Illinois Revised Statutes—The Major Source of Illinois Law*, 59 CHI.-[ ]KENT L. REV. 761, 761 (1983). For a summary of scholarly commentary precipitated by this change, see G. CALABRESI, *A COMMON LAW FOR THE AGE OF STATUTES* 1-7 (1982) (especially sources cited in note 1). See also J. HURST, *DEALING WITH STATUTES* (1982); Easterbrook, *Statutes' Domains*, 50 U. CHI. L. REV. 533 (1983).

2. See *infra* text accompanying notes 110-13 (discussing commercial bill status systems).

3. See *infra* text accompanying notes 33-42 (discussing commercial statutory retrieval systems).

4. For a general description of the statute and bill status files of legislative information systems, see Chartrand, *Legislative Uses of Information Technology*, in *COMPUTERS AND THE LAW* 107-14 (R. Bigelow 3d ed. 1981); Schulte, *A Survey of Computerized Legislative Information Systems*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 99 (1979); SCIENCE POLICY RESEARCH DIVISION, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, *STATE LEGISLATURE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY*, H.R. DOC. NO. 271, 95th Cong., 1st Sess. 60-75, 87-99 (1977) (U.S. Serial Set 13183-4) [hereinafter cited as *STATE LEGISLATURE USE*].

publications such as bills, calendars, and session laws. Many legislatures have adopted other less interrelated uses of computer technology, including legislative redistricting, legislative accounting, and fiscal, budget, and economic applications such as revenue forecasting and projecting the budgetary effects of legislation. The functions, however, that are likely to be of interest to most lawyers and law librarians are statutory search and retrieval and current bill status determination. Currently, the legislative information systems of thirty-seven states have a statutory search and retrieval function; forty-two states and the U.S. Congress have bill status systems.<sup>5</sup>

Although the statutory and bill status files of legislative information systems may be useful to the legal researcher, these government owned and financed databases are frequently not accessible to users outside of the legislatures.<sup>6</sup> Access policies are not uniform between legislatures, and only a minority of legislatures allow outside users direct access to their systems. Other legislatures allow outside users indirect access; users may request information from a terminal operator but are not permitted to use the terminals themselves.<sup>7</sup> Many more legislatures do not even permit indirect access. If the expense of searching commercial systems remains high and as more researchers realize the importance and uniqueness of the data held in legislative information systems, the demand for outside user access will grow.

This article traces the development of automated legislative information systems, particularly statutory search and retrieval systems and bill status systems, and compares the legislative systems to currently available commercial systems. Because systems and policies vary between jurisdictions, the article treats several legislative systems in more detail, comparing some jurisdictions that have permitted outside user access to jurisdictions with more restrictive policies. Finally, the article proposes some solutions to the access and dissemination issues.

## II. STATUTORY RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS

### A. Overview of Available Systems

Private developers created the first automated statutory search and retrieval systems in an effort to improve access to the statutory law of the various states. Many legislatures, however, were quick to recognize the benefits of automated statutory retrieval for their own legislative purposes and contracted with the private developers to purchase search software and statutory databases in machine-readable form. These systems were later improved and became key files in the legislative information systems of many states.

The commercial systems developed later placed more emphasis on the search and retrieval of cases than on the search and retrieval of statutes. Although commercial systems eventually made federal statutes in the form of the *United States Code* available, the developers of these systems ignored state statutes. For the most part, the commercial systems still do not include state statutes.

---

5. See COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS, *THE BOOK OF THE STATES* 1982-83, at 232-33 (1982).

6. See Schulte, *supra* note 4, at 120-29.

7. For example, outside users in Texas may obtain current bill status information by calling a toll-free number.

## 1. State Legislatures

State legislatures began using computerized statutory retrieval systems as early as the late 1960's by contracting with the private vendors who had developed the necessary software. Major vendors included Aspen Systems Corporation, Data Retrieval Corporation of America, and International Business Machines Corporation (IBM). Aspen is credited with the development of the first full-text statutory retrieval system.<sup>8</sup>

The system developed by Aspen had its origin at the Health Law Center of the University of Pittsburgh.<sup>9</sup> In the 1950's, the Health Law Center began experimenting with computerized retrieval of the full text of statutes in an effort to improve access to multistate laws relevant to the field of health. Partially because of variations in format and terminology, manually prepared indexes had proved unsatisfactory to the Center's director, Professor John Harty, during his attempt to compile a hospital manual covering the statutes of all fifty states.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, in 1959, the Center placed the entire text of all the Pennsylvania statutes on magnetic tapes, without any indexing.<sup>11</sup> The Center created a concordance of all searchable words (words other than common articles, prepositions, and so forth) and assigned unique addresses to each word in every document (statutory section).<sup>12</sup> With the computer, the researcher could quickly search and retrieve statutes containing particular words or combinations of words. This experiment was so successful that the Center soon added additional state statutes to the database.<sup>13</sup> By 1968 the successor to the Health Law Center's system—Aspen Systems Corporation—had computerized the full statutes for all fifty states and the *U.S. Code* in a one-billion character database known as SYSTEM 50.<sup>14</sup> The Aspen system was marketed commercially and, although intended primarily as a service for lawyers and corporations, was most popular with state legislatures and federal agencies. Nineteen state legislatures immediately purchased their states' machine-readable statutes, and twelve of those leg-

---

8. Berul, *Legal and Legislative Information Processing in the United States*, in 14 *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE* 183, 183 (1975) ("Earlier scattered attempts by a handful of private and public institutions were generally unsuccessful or on too small a scale to become prototypes.").

9. Harty, *Use of the Computer in Statutory Research and the Legislative Process*, in *COMPUTERS AND THE LAW* 53, 54 (R. Bigelow 2d ed. 1969). See generally Harty, *The "Key Words in Combination" Approach*, 1962 M.U.L.L. 54 [hereinafter cited as Harty, *Key Words*] (describing the system developed at the Health Law Center).

10. The difficulty of doing comparative searches of state statutes is sometimes surprising to the neophyte but certainly not surprising to the experienced law librarian. See L. FOSTER & C. BOAST, *SUBJECT COMPILATIONS OF STATE LAWS: RESEARCH GUIDE AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY* 3-7 (1981).

11. Berul, *supra* note 8, at 185.

12. Harty, *Key Words*, *supra* note 9, at 58. For instance, a portion of the concordance might appear as:

TAX	897.009.7	4281.013.5
	4282.016.4	4921.004.11
TAX-FREE	22.016.8	98.002.18
	2053.011.4	2099.01.2

In this example, "[t]he word 'tax' appears in document 897, sentence 9, as word 7, it appears again in document 4281, in sentence 13 as word 5." *Id.*

13. *Id.*

14. Berul, *supra* note 8, at 185.

islatures acquired Aspen's full-text retrieval software, ASPENSEARCH IV.<sup>15</sup> Another twelve states contracted with Aspen for computer searches of their databases.<sup>16</sup>

Following Aspen, other statutory search and retrieval systems were developed and marketed. Within the same decade, both Data Retrieval Corporation of America and IBM began marketing software that could be used to search the full text of statutes.<sup>17</sup> Data Retrieval developed a system, SIRS (Statutory Information Retrieval System), and offered it to legislatures either separately or together with two related systems: ALTER (Automated Legal Text Entry and Revision System), for bill preparation, and TIPE (Type-composition Interface to Photo-composition Equipment System), for automated type-composition.<sup>18</sup> The Wisconsin legislature first used the SIRS system in 1965, and by 1969 Wisconsin was using the database created for SIRS to publish their statutes.<sup>19</sup>

The computerized retrieval system developed by IBM, now known as STAIRS (Storage and Information Retrieval System), could accommodate databases beyond statutory files, such as files of regulations and judicial opinions. Also, the system could automatically switch a search from one file to another without the researcher having to reenter the query.<sup>20</sup> In 1973, Florida chose STAIRS because the legislature wanted the capability of searching the full text of statutes online and the potential of expanding the system with additional files.<sup>21</sup> SIRS and STAIRS resemble ASPENSEARCH in that all three systems handle full-text files and perform searches using words or phrases (keywords) joined by boolean logic connectors.<sup>22</sup>

Currently, nearly forty state legislatures are using automated statutory retrieval systems.<sup>23</sup> Most states use systems that are sophisticated descendants of the ASPENSEARCH, SIRS, or STAIRS systems that enable the user to search online the full text of statutes from remote terminals. Other states have chosen to develop their own systems inhouse or to use systems that are unique to the state.<sup>24</sup> National

---

15. *Id.*

16. Banks, *A Comprehensive Computer-Assisted Legislative Program: Virginia*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 95, 103 (B. Eres ed. 1980) ("The initial queries were mailed to Aspen and processed, and the results were mailed back to the requester, generally within about two days.").

17. See Frost, *SIRS, ALTER and TIPE: Three Integrated Text Processing Systems*, in AUTOMATED LAW RESEARCH 125 (1973); Furth, *STAIRS: An Interactive Full-Text Retrieval System*, in AUTOMATED LAW RESEARCH 19 (1973).

18. Frost, *supra* note 17, at 126.

19. Frost, *supra* note 17, at 127.

20. Furth, *supra* note 17, at 23. The early statutory search and retrieval systems, such as the system developed by the Health Law Center, used computers with magnetic tape as a storage medium. Searching for sections of particular statutes on these systems was quite time-consuming and costly. Therefore, until the newer direct access storage devices became available, questions to be searched on these systems were accumulated and then run through the computer in batches. *Id.* at 19.

21. Johnson, *Legislative Information Processing in the State of Florida*, in COMPARATIVE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS: THE USE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS 73, 83 (J. Worthley ed. 1976).

22. STATE LEGISLATURE USE, *supra* note 4, at 92.

23. In 1982, thirty-seven state legislatures had computerized statutory retrieval systems operational; two other state legislatures had systems planned. COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS, *supra* note 5.

24. According to a 1978 survey, 29 states had computerized statutory retrieval systems: 7 states used ASPENSEARCH, 11 states used SIRS, and 5 states used STAIRS search software. Four other states used systems developed inhouse; one state used OBAR (LEXIS), and one state used the University of

organizations, such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, have promoted coordination and offered their assistance in the development of these systems, but little progress has been made toward creating a common database of state statutes.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Congress

The U.S. Congress has access to two statutory retrieval systems, FLITE (Federal Legal Information Through Electronics) and JURIS (Justice Retrieval and Inquiry System).<sup>26</sup> Although both systems were developed by or under the sponsorship of the federal government, neither system was specifically designed to support the legislative activities of Congress as part of a larger legislative information system.

The United States Air Force funded the development of FLITE in the early 1960's by entering into a series of contracts with the University of Pittsburgh Health Law Center.<sup>27</sup> This funding led to the development of the government's first full-text legal information retrieval system. This system became operational in 1967. Continued support from commercial contractors expanded the system's capabilities and databases. By the early 1970's, major databases included the full text of the *United States Code*, as well as the texts of relevant series of court reports and international law materials. Although searches on the FLITE system had to be performed on remote terminals by staff attorneys at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center in Denver, in the early 1970's FLITE was the only system on which computerized searches of federal legislation could be performed. Unfortunately, no access by users outside the federal government was allowed.

Following the success of FLITE, the Department of Justice began the inhouse development of a similar system, JURIS, in 1970.<sup>28</sup> The Justice Department intended JURIS to provide users with online searching capabilities of federal statutes and case law, as well as internal Justice Department briefs, memoranda, and related materials. Among the first documents to be loaded into the JURIS database was the *United States Code*. The Department of Justice, however, also relied on external sources to supplement its JURIS database. For example, in the early 1970's the Justice Department entered into an agreement with Mead Data Central in order to

---

Nebraska system. Schulte, *supra* note 4, at 119. California is unique in its use of the QUIC/LAW System developed in Canada and adopted by West for use in the original WESTLAW system. Telephone interview with William Eubanks, Chief of Data Processing for the California Legislature (June 20, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Eubanks interview].

25. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has worked on a project to computerize abstracts of state laws on select topics; however, access to this system may be limited to state legislatures. See Nyberg & Boast, "Subject Compilations of State Laws: Research Guide and Annotated Bibliography" *Update*, 75 LAW LIBR. J. 121, 121 n.1 (1982). NCSL has apparently suspended an earlier and more ambitious project to maintain a 50-state computerized system for statutory retrieval and bill status reporting. See Schulte, *supra* note 4, at 117.

26. See M. COHEN & R. BERRING, HOW TO FIND THE LAW 701-02 (8th ed. 1983) (describing briefly FLITE and JURIS). See also Hambleton, *JURIS: Legal Information in the Department of Justice*, 69 LAW LIBR. J. 199 (1976); Mallow, *LITE: Legal Information Through Electronics*, in AUTOMATED LAW RESEARCH 97 (1973).

27. Mallow, *supra* note 26, at 97.

28. See Hambleton, *supra* note 26. For a more detailed history of JURIS, see Croydon, *JURIS: A Tool for Legal Research*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 163 (B. Eres ed. 1980).

use the federal case files on Mead's LEXIS system. One consequence of this agreement was a contractual restriction that prohibited nongovernment users from accessing the JURIS system.<sup>29</sup> When the Mead contract was terminated in 1976, the Justice Department reached an agreement with the U.S. Air Force to obtain federal case law in machine-readable form from the FLITE database.<sup>30</sup> Later, the Justice Department reached an agreement with West to use West's copyrighted indexing system.<sup>31</sup> The current JURIS system has an extensive database which includes federal statutes, case law, and other materials. Like FLITE, however, JURIS is not accessible to researchers outside the federal government.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. Commercial Systems

Most legal researchers are familiar with the two major computer-assisted legal research systems, LEXIS and WESTLAW.<sup>33</sup> Both commercial systems have developed substantial case law databases to which federal statutes and regulations have recently been added. These giants, however, virtually ignore state statutes: only two of the four state codes in the LEXIS database have been kept current, and the WESTLAW database has never contained state statutes.

LEXIS was begun in 1964 when the Ohio State Bar Association inaugurated a three-year inquiry into the automation of legal research. OBAR (Ohio Bar Automated Research Corporation, now LEXIS) entered into an agreement with Data Corporation (now Mead Data Central) in 1967 to adapt Data Corporation's Data Central full-text retrieval system to the retrieval of legal information.<sup>34</sup> The original LEXIS database consisted of Ohio primary authorities, including Ohio statutes. The Ohio legislature adopted this system for statutory search and retrieval.<sup>35</sup> By 1971, an agreement was reached between Mead Data Central and the New York State Bar Association to enter New York authorities, including New York statutes, into the LEXIS database.<sup>36</sup> Soon afterwards, LEXIS added statutes and cases from other states, and Mead planned for an expansion that would "establish a national legal electronic library encompassing all federal law and the law of the fifty states."<sup>37</sup> Although the LEXIS database continues to expand with the addition of federal statutes and regulations as well as state and federal cases, few state statutes have been added. In addition to Ohio and New York state statutes, LEXIS added but has now removed the codes for Missouri and Kansas.<sup>38</sup>

---

29. U.S. COMPTROLLER GENERAL, *FEDERAL INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES* 56 (1976).

30. Hambleton, *supra* note 26, at 200-01.

31. See Croydon, *supra* note 28, at 171.

32. Federal government users of JURIS include the U.S. Congress. Chartrand, *supra* note 4, at 108.

33. These systems are described in recently published legal research texts. See, e.g., M. COHEN & R. BERRING, *supra* note 26, at 693-701.

34. Rubin, *LEXIS: An Automated Research System*, in *AUTOMATED LAW RESEARCH* 35, 36 (1973). See also Sprowl, *Computer-Assisted Legal Research—An Analysis of Full-Text Document Retrieval Systems, Particularly the LEXIS System*, 1 AM. B. FOUND. RESEARCH J. 175 (1976).

35. Schulte, *supra* note 4, at 119.

36. See Rubin, *supra* note 34, at 36-37.

37. *Id.* at 36.

38. A June 1983 search of the state files in LEXIS showed that appellate court opinions dating from 1977 or earlier are now available for all 50 states. The statutes for only Ohio and New York are being kept current, however. In early 1984 LEXIS formally removed the codes for Missouri and Kansas

WESTLAW was first made available to the public in 1976.<sup>39</sup> The early WESTLAW system was a by-product of West Publishing Company's key number indexing system. Users could search online the headnotes of opinions from West's National Reporter System using the QUIC/LAW retrieval software developed at Queen's University in Canada. WESTLAW, however, was at a competitive disadvantage compared to LEXIS, because WESTLAW lacked a full-text database and used relatively inefficient search software.

WESTLAW expanded its database quickly to include the full text of cases and federal statutes by entering into contractual agreements with the federal government. The government provided legal materials that it had converted to machine-readable form to use in the FLITE and JURIS system to WESTLAW in exchange for West's permission for the government to use West's copyrighted digest system.<sup>40</sup> West also developed improved retrieval software. These enhancements, together with continued expansion of the WESTLAW database, have made the commercial systems much more competitive. Like LEXIS, however, West has given state statutes low priority. Thus, despite West's publication of the codified statutes for numerous states,<sup>41</sup> WESTLAW does not currently include any state statutes.

Other commercial systems contain state statutes only to the extent that the statutes are relevant to a particular subject area. For example, NILES Publishing Company, publishers of the *National Insurance Law Service*, is developing a fifty-state database of insurance statutes and regulations. Another database, developed by the federal government and made commercially available through DIALOG, includes relevant state statutes—Child Abuse and Neglect (DIALOG File 64). These systems do not offer comprehensive coverage of state statutes.

Perhaps LEXIS or WESTLAW or both will add the full text of state statutes to their databases in the near future.<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, users of today's extensive and sophisticated legal research systems are no better off than Professor Horty was nearly twenty-five years ago when his frustration in the search of state laws led to the development of the first full-text legal research system.

## B. Government and Commercial Systems Compared

The automated statutory retrieval systems used in the government and commercial sectors have an intertwined history which has led to some similarities in software and databases. The first systems used by the legislatures were developed externally and were neither designed nor specifically intended for legislative uses. Later

---

from the database. See MEAD DATA CENTRAL, LIBRARY CONTENTS AND PRICE LIST FOR SEARCHES (Feb. 14, 1984).

39. See Herman, *WESTLAW: Computerized Legal Research Program of West Publishing Company*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 157 (B. Eres ed. 1980). See also Abramson, Kennedy & Pollock, *Inside the West Empire*, Am. Law., Oct. 1983, at 90 [hereinafter cited as Abramson].

40. Abramson, *supra* note 39, at 94.

41. West publishes the statutory compilations of 21 states; Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Co. publishes the statutory compilations of five states. M. COHEN & R. BERRING, *supra* note 26, at 210.

42. Attendees at the 1983 AALL institute, "Creative Research in Law Libraries," compiled a list of suggested new databases and sent the list to representatives from both WESTLAW and LEXIS. The database at the top of this list is "all state statutes or possibly indexes to statutes." Letter from Penny A. Hazelton and Anne H. Butler, Co-directors of "Creative Research in Law Libraries" to Frank Alan, Mead Data Central (Aug. 16, 1983).



legislative systems were developed cooperatively when the legislatures and their agents entered into contracts with commercial firms for the development of software and the conversion of data. Similarly, the earliest commercial system, LEXIS, was the product of a joint venture between a state bar association and a commercial enterprise. Somewhat later, WESTLAW relied on data put into machine readable form by the federal government. Despite this history of cooperation, a variety of statutory retrieval systems has developed. Those systems used within the government sector by the legislatures are the most diverse, while competition has made the major commercial systems more similar. Following is a brief comparison of the database coverage, access policies, and user charges for representative systems in both sectors.

### 1. Database Coverage

Both government and commercial systems include federal legislation in their databases. The *United States Code* can be searched online through the Justice Department's JURIS system or the Air Force's FLITE system. The *United States Code* is also available on both LEXIS and WESTLAW. These commercial systems have recently added federal regulations to their databases.

Coverage of state legislation is much more limited, even though state statutes are included in the separate legislative information systems of thirty-seven states.<sup>43</sup> Currently no commercially available or government-owned system includes the statutes for all fifty states. Of the commercial systems, only LEXIS includes any state statutes and only the statutes of New York and Ohio are current. Of the government-owned systems, only the statutes of a single state can be searched on one system. Efforts to combine these separate statutory databases into one searchable system have not met with success.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, legislative personnel of most states at least can conduct automated searches of their own state's statutes. Unfortunately, some states do not grant access to these government-owned systems to anyone outside the legislature.

### 2. Access Policies

No uniform access policy exists for the statutory retrieval systems controlled by the legislatures, but most legislatures deny access to outside users. One survey found that only fifteen legislatures permitted outside users, such as state agencies and libraries, access to their statutory databases; of those, only seven would honor search requests from the public.<sup>45</sup>

The states of Oregon and California represent opposite views on access to legislative information systems. Both states have automated statutory retrieval capabilities in their legislative information systems; Oregon's system is widely available; the California system is not.

The Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) includes the full text of the *Oregon Revised Statutes* and utilizes STAIRS software for search and retrieval. "It is available to all state, local and U.S. Government agencies as well as private organizations through a request to the OLIS Director."<sup>46</sup> Several law libraries have

---

43. See Appendix 1.

44. Nyberg & Boast, *supra* note 25.

45. See Schulte, *supra* note 4, at 120-29.

46. LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, OREGON LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS 6 (phamplet 1983). The current access charge for nonlegislative users who have dial-up terminals is \$55 initially plus \$20 per month.

taken advantage of Oregon's open access policies, including the Northwestern Law School Library in Portland. Users at Northwestern found the system easy to learn and to use; additionally, the system is capable of answering some statutory and other research questions more adequately than the traditional methods of legal research.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, the California system includes the full text of California codes and utilizes QUIC/LAW search and retrieval software (the same as originally used in WESTLAW).

The California system, however, is not accessible to anyone outside of the state legislature, not even to members of state agencies.<sup>48</sup> Responding to these restrictive policies, over one hundred potential users of the California system have lobbied the state legislature for access.<sup>49</sup> In light of such pressure, states like California may be reconsidering their limited access policies.

The federal government has limited access to the federal FLITE and JURIS databases, which both include the *United States Code*, to users within the federal government. The contractual restrictions imposed by West may prevent JURIS from being made more widely available. However, the Joint Committee on Printing is considering making the *United States Code* database, as well as other government databases, available to depository libraries.<sup>50</sup>

Commercial systems can be searched by any entity capable of paying the systems' substantial annual subscription fees and search charges.<sup>51</sup> Individuals can sometimes use one of these systems through a public terminal. Search charges vary from \$105 per hour for WESTLAW to a somewhat higher and harder to determine amount for LEXIS. User charges for access to state systems compare favorably. For instance, the OLIS user pays an initial fee of \$55 for dial-up access and is then charged an additional flat rate of \$20 per month.<sup>52</sup>

### III. BILL STATUS SYSTEMS

#### A. Overview of Available Systems

With the increasing number of bills introduced into each session of every state legislature and Congress, it is not surprising that one of the earliest applications of computer technology to the legislative process was for the purpose of monitoring the content and current status of proposed legislation.<sup>53</sup> Unlike the commercially

---

47. Telephone interview with Jerry Hilary, Research Specialist at Lewis and Clark Law Library (June 2, 1983).

48. Eubanks interview, *supra* note 24.

49. *Id.*

50. The Joint Committee on Printing established an Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Library Access to Federal Automated Data Bases in May 1983. For a list of committee members and schedule of meetings, see Depository Library Council to the Public Printer, Materials from the Fall Meeting 103-07 (Sept. 15-17, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Depository Library Council materials]. The AALL representative to this committee is Steve Margeton, Librarian, Steptoe & Johnson, Washington, D.C.

51. Charges for access to WESTLAW and LEXIS vary according to usage. For a recent comparison of costs and databases, see Onove, *A Comparison of the LEXIS and WESTLAW Databases*, LEGAL ECON., Mar.-Apr. 1983, at 27.

52. Telephone interview with Dayle Claudel, Director of the Oregon Legislative Information Systems (May 26, 1983).

53. Chartrand & Bortnick, *An Overview of State Legislative Information Processing*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 49, 52 (B. Eres ed. 1980). Some states, however, have made their programs available to other legislatures.

developed statutory search and retrieval systems, bill status systems were developed separately and inhouse, and each system was uniquely designed to fit the legislative process and to meet the particular needs of one legislature. The state legislatures were the first to develop and utilize these systems, with Congress developing its own computerized system later.<sup>54</sup> Commercially available bill status systems, covering both Congress and the fifty state legislatures, are an even more recent phenomenon.<sup>55</sup>

Computerized bill status systems were first used in the early 1960's in the Iowa and Florida state legislatures.<sup>56</sup> Other states quickly followed suit. By 1970, seventeen state legislatures had their own automated bill status systems in place,<sup>57</sup> and by 1982, all but eight states had systems operational.<sup>58</sup> The Florida system, like many of the early systems, utilized batch processing and produced daily or weekly printed reports. As technology improved, online data entry and inquiry systems accessible by remote terminals became the norm.<sup>59</sup> Also, with improvements in computer software, the ways in which a database could be searched expanded, as did the number and types of printed reports that could be prepared.<sup>60</sup> These improvements led to more sophisticated and flexible bill status systems.<sup>61</sup> The capabilities of each system vary, however, from state to state.

Despite the variation among different legislatures' bill status systems, the systems all tend to have some features in common. For example, these systems all generally contain basic descriptive elements for the bills and resolutions introduced during a session, including: (1) date of introduction, (2) sponsor(s), (3) title, (4) abstract or digest of the bill, (5) bill number, (6) committee(s) to which the bill has been assigned, and (7) legislative action taken.<sup>62</sup> Additional descriptive elements are also common, including: (1) index terms, (2) cosponsor(s), (3) amendments, (4) cross-reference(s) to similar or identical bill(s), (5) reference(s) to statutes affected, (6) conflict with existing law, (7) jurisdiction(s) affected, and (8) fiscal impact notes.<sup>63</sup> While some legislatures may still rely on overnight updating of these files, the trend is to provide users with "real-time" information by actually inputting new action data from terminals located on the floors of the legislative chambers.<sup>64</sup> Another trend is to integrate bill status systems with other legislative information systems, such as statutory search and retrieval systems and the systems for production of printed daily journals and indexes, thereby limiting the number of times information is retyped.<sup>65</sup> Some commentators suggest that bill status reporting systems provide more services directly to legislators than any of the other systems.<sup>66</sup>

As with statutory search and retrieval systems, direct public access to the bill

---

54. See STATE LEGISLATURE USE, *supra* note 4, at 66.

55. For a description of commercial systems, see *infra* notes 107-11 and accompanying text.

56. STATE LEGISLATURE USE, *supra* note 4, at 68-71.

57. J. ELKINS, A SURVEY OF THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING BY STATE LEGISLATURES (AN UPDATE) 12-14 (1974).

58. COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS, *supra* note 5.

59. See Johnson, *Legislative Data Processing: Florida*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 75, 75 (B. Eres ed. 1980).

60. STATE LEGISLATURE USE, *supra* note 4, at 64.

61. *Id.* at 66.

62. *Id.* at 61.

63. *Id.*

64. *Id.* at 68.

65. *Id.*

66. J. ELKINS, *supra* note 57, at 5.

status systems developed by and under the control of the legislatures is generally limited. However, indirect access through the use of free, incoming WATS lines and limited direct access through the placement of public terminals in the capitol or state library is common. This limited accessibility has led to the development of commercial systems. These commercial systems are similar to the systems developed by the legislatures. Commercial systems provide many of the same descriptive elements and enable the user to track bills and obtain current status information online. The commercial databases, however, are often neither as complete nor as current as the databases used within the legislatures. The cost of access is also higher.

### 1. State Legislatures

Most state legislatures now have separately developed and unique computerized bill status systems (see Appendix 1). The capabilities of each system and the policies regarding access by users outside of the legislature vary from state to state (see Appendix 2). A more detailed description of the bill status systems used by two states, Florida and Illinois, follows.<sup>67</sup>

#### a. Florida

The Florida legislature was a pioneer in the adaptation of computer technology to the legislative process. Florida first used computers in 1964 to get more current, accurate information about pending bills.<sup>68</sup> Legislative personnel developed this bill status system inhouse and utilized a computer in the executive branch operating in a batch (offline) mode.<sup>69</sup> State legislators were quick to recognize the computer as a useful tool, and this early bill status system developed rapidly. By 1966, the system was converted from a batch mode to an online operation and by 1973, the legislature had acquired its own computer and had developed a five-year plan for automating additional legislative functions into an integrated system.<sup>70</sup> The bill status system now operates in a real-time mode: files are updated with new information input online from the floor of the legislature. Information may be retrieved online or through various printed reports.<sup>71</sup> Terminals are located on the floor of each chamber so that the database can be updated as soon as status changes occur; committee actions are also entered as the actions become official. Anyone from legislators to members of the general public can make online inquiries from print-only terminals located throughout the Florida capitol, House and Senate office buildings, and outlying areas of the state. Outside of the legislature, individuals may search the bill status system either on their own terminals or on leased terminals provided by the legislature. Individuals who do not have access to a terminal may call

---

67. For less current descriptions of the systems used in each of the states, see the surveys published by the Council of State Governments in 1971, 1972, and 1974. *Id.* at 31-56. For descriptions of the systems of selected states, see *COMPARATIVE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS: THE USE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS* 71-147 (J. Worthley ed. 1976) (Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, Texas, Washington, and Canada); *LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING* 75-126 (B. Eres ed. 1980) (Florida, Virginia, and Washington). See also *STATE LEGISLATURE USE*, *supra* note 4, at 61-74.

68. Johnson, *supra* note 59.

69. *Id.*

70. *Id.* at 75-76.

71. *Id.* at 86-87.

the legislature for status information by dialing an in-WATS facility that operates twenty-four hours every day of the sixty-day legislative session.

Three subsystems of the Florida bill status system provide the user with an array of access points for retrieving information regarding any pending legislation.<sup>72</sup> The bill history subsystem provides the online user with the complete history of all action on every bill introduced. The subsystem contains the bill's sponsor(s) and current status of the bill. The subsystem can list all bills sponsored by any particular legislator and provide information on the activities of legislative committees.<sup>73</sup> Another significant feature is the system's ability to search and list all related bills on the same topic.<sup>74</sup> A subject index subsystem enables the user to retrieve bills by subject,<sup>75</sup> and a citator subsystem provides cross-references between constitutional articles and statutory sections affected by pending legislation.<sup>76</sup>

Florida's bill status system also produces daily printed indexes when the legislature is in session.<sup>77</sup> These indexes provide the user with current bill status information from a variety of access points, including bill number, sponsor, subject, and statutory section affected. However, the information available in printed form, even though revised daily, is not as current as the real-time information available online.

The annual subscription fee for the online service and equipment is currently \$900.<sup>78</sup> For users who own compatible terminals, the access fee is \$275. This fee entitles the subscriber to unlimited access throughout the sixty-day legislative session. During the 1983 legislative session, nearly forty organizations, many of whom were law firms, subscribed to the bill status system.<sup>79</sup>

The Florida legislature sets policy and otherwise oversees the administration for the bill status system through the Joint Legislative Management Committee, while the day-to-day administration of the system falls under the Legislative Information Division which has its own director and staff.<sup>80</sup> The Joint Committee has responsibility and authority for administering all joint functions of the Florida House and Senate. The Committee is composed of three members of the House, appointed by the speaker, and three members of the Senate, appointed by the president. The Committee's purpose is to set broad and general policies and to provide uniformity and consistency in the management of joint legislative activities and functions. To this end, the Committee oversees the functions of five divisions: administrative services, legislative library, statutory revision and indexing, systems and data processing, and legislative information.

---

72. *Id.*

73. *Id.* at 86.

74. Telephone interview with Mrs. Evelyn H. Van Brunt, Director, Legislative Information Division, Florida Joint Legislative Management Committee (Aug. 5, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Van Brunt interview].

75. *Id.*

76. Johnson, *supra* note 59, at 86.

77. *Id.*

78. Van Brunt interview, *supra* note 74.

79. *Id.*

80. See generally Johnson, *supra* note 59, at 81-84.

## b. Illinois

The Illinois legislature began automating certain functions as early as 1967 with the introduction of a batch mode bill status system and, in 1969, the legislature introduced the SIRS system for searching and retrieving statutes.<sup>81</sup> These early automation efforts, however, were not coordinated, and they were not entirely successful. Thus, in 1969, the Illinois General Assembly created the Joint Committee on Legislative Information Systems to plan and coordinate the automation of legislative functions. The Illinois Joint Committee was somewhat larger than the Florida Joint Committee and had seventeen ex officio members representing legislative committees, commissions, and supportive functions, as well as two senators appointed by the president pro tempore and two representatives appointed by the speaker.<sup>82</sup> One of the first tasks of the Committee was to improve the current bill status system.

The Committee's research indicated that an effective bill status system must provide users with real-time information by revealing bill status changes as soon as changes occur. The Committee, therefore, incorporated system enhancement to real-time status into its first five-year plan.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, the Committee set the following goals for this real-time bill status system: to provide a description of each bill introduced; to provide a description of the floor actions taken as the bill passes through the legislative process; to record floor action to facilitate up-to-date information retrieval; and to associate each bill with sponsorship, committee assignment, topic, and individual user interest.<sup>84</sup> Thus, despite the Committee's apparent unwieldy size, the Joint Committee made substantial progress toward planning for an improved bill status system.

The Illinois legislature reorganized its Joint Committee in 1974.<sup>85</sup> Prior to this reorganization, however, the legislature appointed an advisory committee to represent system users.<sup>86</sup> Among the recommendations made by this advisory committee, and agreed to by the Joint Committee, was a recommendation to provide access to the system by outside agencies.<sup>87</sup>

Once the legislature extended access privileges to the Illinois Legislative Information System to users outside the legislature, the number of users quickly increased. In 1978, 69 users of this system included 19 legislative offices, 5 elected officials, 37 state agencies, and 8 private agencies.<sup>88</sup> By 1980, the total number of users nearly doubled to 112; 83 of these were from outside the legislature, and 27 were private agencies.<sup>89</sup> Although few new legislative users were added during the next two years, the total number of system subscribers reached 152 by 1982, with private agency use

---

81. Regner & Brown, *The Illinois Legislative Information System: Evolution and Lessons*, in *COMPARATIVE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS: THE USE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS* 88, 88 (J. Worthley ed. 1976).

82. *Id.* at 89.

83. *Id.* at 91.

84. *Id.* at 91-92.

85. *Id.* at 94.

86. *Id.* at 92.

87. *Id.*

88. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM, STATE OF ILLINOIS, ANNUAL REPORT 1977-78, at 12-13 (1979).

89. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM, STATE OF ILLINOIS, BIENNIAL REPORT 1979-80, at 14-17 (1981).

more than doubling from 27 to 65.<sup>90</sup> Private agencies using the Illinois system include several law firms; several kinds of libraries, including the Cook County Law Library; two legal publishers; and numerous lobbyists.<sup>91</sup>

State agencies have free access to the bill status system, but the agencies must use their own terminals.<sup>92</sup> For this purpose, state agencies are liberally defined as "Departments, Boards, [and] Commissions of the Executive Branch and Judicial Branch of government who are annually appropriated funds for their operations by the Illinois General Assembly."<sup>93</sup> Thus, the reference staff at Northern Illinois University's Law Library, like other state agencies, has been able to use this system free-of-charge with a dial-up terminal, after following a simple procedure to get its equipment approved and to obtain a password.

Other users may access the bill status system, using their own equipment, by paying the annual subscription fee, currently set at \$550.<sup>94</sup> Payment of this fee entitles users to access the system during those times that the system is available to its other regular legislative users: from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, throughout the year, and for somewhat longer hours when the legislature is in session.

Users may use this system to track and to locate the current status of all bills introduced during the two-year legislative session. All bills, whether the bills are defeated or become law, remain in the system until the end of the session. The user can retrieve either condensed or complete bill status information by bill number, topic, or sponsor.<sup>95</sup> The condensed form gives the bill number, a short description, the sponsor(s), the location, and—most importantly—the last action on the bill. The complete form includes a brief synopsis and a complete history of the bill. The user can retrieve all bills pending in any committee by entering the code number assigned to that committee.

The system's ability to create special user files for tracking legislation is also noteworthy.<sup>96</sup> The user enters the bill numbers for legislation of interest; the system then "remembers" the numbers and ascertains the status of those bills when queried. Several law firms have used tracking to prepare regular weekly reports on the status of legislation of interest to the firm by setting up separate bill tracking files for members requesting this service.<sup>97</sup> One Chicago law firm even uses this feature to create a newsletter.<sup>98</sup>

The Illinois system has some limitations. For instance, only a synopsis, not a complete text of a bill, is available online. Also, the system is unable to track amendments. Some users complain that the system is too slow to identify amended por-

---

90. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM, STATE OF ILLINOIS, BIENNIAL REPORT 1981-82, at 20-24 (1983).

91. *Id.* at 23-24.

92. *Id.* at 20.

93. *Id.* (citing 3 ILL. ADMIN. CODE § 600).

94. *Id.* at 20.

95. See LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM, STATE OF ILLINOIS, BILL STATUS INQUIRY SYSTEM DIAL UP TERMINALS (rev. ed. 1983) (describing the bill status system features).

96. *Id.* at 20-22.

97. Telephone interview with Denis Kowalewski, Librarian, Chapman and Cutler, Chicago (Aug. 11, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Kowalewski interview].

98. Telephone interview with Denise Mahaney, Librarian, Vedder, Price, Kaufman & Kammholz, Chicago (Aug. 11, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Mahaney interview].

tions of a bill.<sup>99</sup> Other users have objected to the slow transmission rate (300 baud) combined with the high cost of long distance calls to the state capitol.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, most users—especially law librarians—praise this system. One law firm librarian, who was also using a commercial database to obtain bill status information, found the Illinois system to be more complete and current and much less expensive than the commercial system.<sup>101</sup>

## 2. Congress

Congress did not implement an automated bill status system until state legislatures had proven the usefulness of similar systems.<sup>102</sup> The system used by Congress was developed within the House of Representatives under the guidance of the Committee on House Administration. This Committee formed a House Information Systems (H.I.S.) staff in 1971 to evaluate, study, and design a bill status system. The H.I.S. system became operational in a real-time mode in 1973 and developed into the system now known as LEGIS.<sup>103</sup>

The LEGIS database includes digests of bills from the 95th Congress to date and public laws from the 93d Congress, in addition to current bill status information.<sup>104</sup> Bill status data is updated daily and includes retrievable information on bill number, names of sponsor and cosponsors, date of introduction, committees and subcommittees to which the bill was referred, title of the bill, and digest of the bill.<sup>105</sup> Searches can be performed by entering the bill number, public law number, sponsor's name, or combinations of any words appearing in the digest summaries.<sup>106</sup>

Members of both houses use this system, and many members have terminals in their offices.<sup>107</sup> Online access to LEGIS is not available outside Congress, although a similar bill status system is available at the Library of Congress through SCORPIO.<sup>108</sup> Current bill status information may also be obtained by telephone from the Legislative Information Office of LEGIS.<sup>109</sup> Many of the advantages of direct online searching are lost, however, because the only information available by telephone is the current status of a particular bill.

---

99. Kowalewski interview, *supra* note 97.

100. Mahaney interview, *supra* note 98.

101. Kowalewski interview, *supra* note 97.

102. For a full description of the history of the congressional bill status system, see HOUSE COMM. ON ADMINISTRATION, 94TH CONG., 1ST SESS., THE BILL STATUS SYSTEM FOR THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (Comm. Print 1975).

103. A similar system was developed by the Congressional Research Service and is used to produce the *Digest of Public General Bills and Resolutions*. This bill status system is available as a file on SCORPIO at the Library of Congress. See Power, Woody, Scott & Fitzgerald, *SCORPIO, A Subject Content Oriented Retriever for Processing Information On-Line*, 67 SPECIAL LIBR. 285, 286 (1976) [hereinafter cited as Power].

104. Telephone interview with Dave Reichmann, Legislative Information Specialist, U.S. Congress (Apr. 5, 1983) [hereinafter cited as Reichmann interview].

105. Norton, *The Quiet Revolution of Information Technology in Congress*, in LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING 3, 12 (B. Eres. ed 1980).

106. Reichmann interview, *supra* note 104.

107. Norton, *supra* note 105.

108. See Power, *supra* note 103.

109. To reach a legislative information specialist at this office, dial 202-225-1772. The policy for searching status information for people outside of Congress is unclear, but many individuals have obtained help by calling a specialist. An alternative is to request the information from a member of Congress.



### 3. Commercial Systems

Current bill status information can be obtained online also through several commercially available systems. Most of these systems were developed within just the past few years and enable the user to monitor pending legislation throughout the fifty states and at the federal level. Legi-slate and ELSS are two of the most comprehensive commercial systems.

#### a. Legi-slate

Legi-slate is a computer-based bill tracking and regulatory monitoring service based in Washington, D.C., and owned by the *Washington Post*.<sup>110</sup> Although a descendant of a Texas bill tracking system, Legi-slate currently covers only federal activity. Plans for Legi-slate include the addition of a fifty-state bill status database.

The Legi-slate database is updated daily with information taken from the *Congressional Record* and the *Federal Register*. The database contains references to all bills and resolutions from the beginning of the 96th Congress. The bill status information available on Legi-slate is similar to the information on LEGIS: bill number, sponsor and cosponsors, short title, caption, date of introduction, committee referrals, subject keywords, citations of amended laws, and citations to similar or companion bills. *Congressional Record* page references to all amendments are also included.

Users can search bills online by bill number, sponsor, date of introduction, citation of law amended, or subject. The subject searches must be made from a thesaurus, a controlled list of subject headings. Bills can also be located by searching for words or phrases that might appear in the bill captions. Members' voting records and committee meeting schedules can also be searched.

Additionally, users can create confidential files for tracking bills of particular interest. The system can then, on command, retrieve a list of bills within the file whose status has changed since the last search. The system can also list bills within the file that are scheduled for committee hearings or mark-up.

Beyond bill status information, Legi-slate can be used to locate and monitor announcements appearing in the *Federal Register*. Legi-slate includes summary date and page references for all announcements about presidential documents, as well as new or proposed rules and regulations. The user can track this information by creating confidential user files similar to the user files for bills. The cost to access Legi-slate is now \$390 per month. (The user must provide the equipment.) This fee includes two hours of usage, an instruction handbook, and training for one operator. Additional time on the system is billed at \$195 per hour.

#### b. Electronic Legislative Search System (ELSS)

ELSS is a computer-based legislative tracking system that covers selected legislation from all fifty states and Congress.<sup>111</sup> Commerce Clearing House (CCH) and General Electric Information Services developed ELSS, using the information-

---

110. This description of Legi-slate is based on a telephone interview with Bob Hanson, Marketing Manager for Legi-slate (Apr. 5, 1983), a Legi-slate brochure, and a conversation with a law firm librarian who uses Legi-slate.

111. This description of ELSS is based on a demonstration of the system by and conversations with Linda Curtin, Manager of Electronic Legislative Reporting, at the 1983 AALL convention; brochures supplied by Commerce Clearing House; and a critical discussion with a law firm librarian who uses ELSS.

gathering network developed by CCH over the years to support its many legal publications. This system became available online in 1981. ELSS is the first in a whole spectrum of computer-based products that CCH is planning to develop.

The ELSS database includes summaries of bills on selected topics covering most of the proposed legislation in all fifty states and Congress. This information is updated daily and includes bill sponsor(s), committee assignments and actions, floor actions, executive actions, enactments and/or defeats, and public law numbers. The user can retrieve current status or full history information by entering some combination of the following: subject code or range of subject codes, jurisdictions (particular states or Congress), sponsor(s), and dates.

ELSS search time costs \$190 per hour.<sup>112</sup> An annual subscription fee of \$2,500, of which \$2,280 are advance user charges, is also required for access to the entire state and federal database. Law school users are exempt from the subscription fee.

### c. Other Commercial Systems

Several other online commercial bill status and tracking systems are available or in the planning stage. At the federal level, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., is planning to make an online system, tentatively named "Washington Alert Service," available in late 1983.<sup>113</sup> This service will include six files, one of which will be a bill status database for Congress. Like Legi-slate, the source of bill status information will be the daily *Congressional Record*. This system is to have bill tracking capabilities. The system will provide references to Congressional Quarterly's *Weekly Report*. Congressional schedules, daily updates of congressional action (like an index and abstract of the *Congressional Record*), summaries of newly released congressional documents (similar to *Congress in Print*), roll call votes, congressional profiles, and the full text of the *Weekly Report* (already available on NEXIS) will also be available. Congressional Quarterly has not yet determined the charge for accessing this system, which will be searchable on a variety of terminals.

Another computer-based system that can be used for tracking both state and federal legislation is PAI Legislative Services, offered by a relatively new firm, Public Affairs Information.<sup>114</sup> Like ELSS, the PAI database includes current bill status information for most of the proposed legislation in all fifty states and Congress. PAI is updated daily with information from the *Congressional Record*. Every bill in the database is summarized and assigned keywords from a thesaurus of fifteen hundred terms. Other data elements noted for each bill include: state, house of origin, bill number, author, title, identical bill references, introduction date, and original committee reference. The user can do topic searches for bills in one or more state at a time. Searches for specific bills can also be made by entering state, house of origin, and bill number. As with the Illinois Bill Status System, clients may maintain confidential bill lists for tracking purposes in the PAI computer. The client can then use the computer at any time to obtain current status reports for these bills.

---

112. The rates are for accessing the system up to three hours per month; after the three-hour threshold is reached access rates decrease.

113. Telephone interview with Ross Evans, Washington Alert Service Manager, Congressional Quarterly (July 12, 1983).

114. This description of PAI Legislative Services is based on a telephone interview with Art Zimmerman, Vice President, Public Affairs Information (July 12, 1983), and PAI brochures. This firm should not be confused with Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS); Public Affairs Information is a completely separate entity based in Sacramento, Cal.

Those bills selected by a user for tracking have more data added including hearing dates (if available), history of actions taken, and final disposition. The PAI system is accessible on most asynchronous terminals; a dedicated line is recommended. Access costs vary, but the base fee in 1983 was \$24,500 for fifty-state coverage with unlimited coverage of topics. For those users who require less extensive coverage, costs are lower.

### B. Government and Commercial Systems Compared

The separate bill status systems under the control of the various state legislatures and Congress differ in regard to database content, system capabilities, and access policies. Nevertheless, these systems can be generally compared to the bill status systems offered by commercial vendors in the following areas: breadth and depth of database coverage, timeliness of information, and cost of access. The commercial systems are superior to the legislatures' systems in only one category—breadth of database coverage. The databases of legislature-controlled systems are generally more extensive and current, and the legislatures' systems are less costly to use than commercial systems. Potential users should weigh their needs against each system before determining which system is best for them.

Breadth of database coverage refers to the number of jurisdictions that a database covers. Only commercial systems cover bill status information for all fifty states; government-owned systems limit their database coverage to the legislative activity of one jurisdiction. Commercial systems sometimes contain related files, such as CQ's *Weekly Report*, which may be useful to subscribers. Thus, commercial systems offer the user more breadth of coverage. This breadth may be an important and necessary feature for those tracking legislation in more than one jurisdiction.

Depth of database coverage refers to the amount of legislation included in a database. Although commercial systems may include all proposed federal legislation in their databases, commercial systems provide more limited coverage at the state level. Only the systems controlled by the state legislatures offer comprehensive coverage of all proposed state legislation. For users who are only interested in one jurisdiction but who want comprehensive coverage, depth of coverage may be a critical consideration.

Commercial system databases are not updated as quickly as the databases of the legislatures. For instance, commercial systems that cover Congress rely on the printed *Congressional Record* for updating their databases. Those commercial systems that cover state legislatures are even less current. On the other hand, the congressional LEGIS system is updated on the same day that action on a bill occurs. The trend in state legislatures is to operate bill status systems in a real-time mode by inputting new information from the floors of the legislatures. For users who would like the most current bill status information, updating procedures may be an important consideration.

Finally, the charge for searching a government database—when access is allowed—is generally far less than the charge for searching a commercial database. The large, sunken costs for creating government legislative information databases are paid for with tax dollars. Therefore, the legislatures need to charge outside users an amount sufficient to cover only the real access costs. Commercial systems, however, must charge enough to recover the costs of recreating the database in addition to the incremental costs. Thus, for example, the annual subscription fee to Illinois' Bill Status System, which entitles the subscriber to unlimited access, would

only cover about two hours of search time on a commercial system. Clearly when cost is a consideration, the systems controlled by legislatures are superior.

Additional factors to be considered in comparing bill status systems include the ability of the system to track legislation and create confidential user files, the ease of using the system, the availability of training programs and materials, and the baud rate at which the system communicates. Commercial systems may appear superior when judged according to these additional factors because commercial systems are designed for the public rather than the legislatures. Nevertheless, the legislature-controlled systems, with their comprehensive and timely databases and lower search costs, could greatly enhance research on pending legislation in particular jurisdictions. Wider adoption by the legislatures of policies that permit outside users access to these systems could, therefore, benefit the legal community and the public in general.

#### IV. ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION ISSUES

Access to legislative information systems is a small part of a larger question concerning access to government information in general, a growing proportion of which is only available in machine-readable form.<sup>115</sup> Although this larger issue is being addressed, no national information policy has yet evolved.<sup>116</sup> Such a policy should take into account the conflicting interests concerning access to information.

##### A. Balancing Conflicting Interests

The conflicting public, private, and commercial interests to be considered and balanced in information-related legislation include the public's right to know, the individual's right to privacy, and the commercial sector's right to compete fairly in the marketplace.<sup>117</sup> Existing legislation at the federal level balances some of these interests. For instance, the Freedom of Information Act<sup>118</sup> and Government in the Sunshine Act<sup>119</sup> address the public's right to know. The Privacy Act of 1974<sup>120</sup> was designed to protect individuals from the disclosure of sensitive data held by the government. Policy guidelines proposed under the more recently enacted Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980<sup>121</sup> are more sympathetic to commercial interests. These proposed guidelines treat information as a valuable resource and "ensure that Federal agencies do not compete unfairly with the private sector when they provide information products and services to the public."<sup>122</sup> Librarians have traditionally regarded

---

115. An example, a substantial portion of the data collected for the 1980 census is available only in machine-readable form for purchase—for those who have the equipment to use computer tapes—at a cost of about \$38,000. Hacker, *Census Figures for Corporate Use*, N.Y. Times, Aug. 21, 1983, § 7 (Book Reviews), at 7.

116. See Levin, *Access and Dissemination Issues Concerning Federal Government Information*, 74 SPECIAL LIBR. 127, 127 (1983). Information policy is discussed more broadly in I. POOL, *TECHNOLOGIES OF FREEDOM* 226-51 (1983).

117. See OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT, U.S. CONGRESS, *COMPUTER-BASED NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS: TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES* 15-16 (1981).

118. 5 U.S.C. § 552 (1982).

119. 5 U.S.C. § 552b (1982).

120. 5 U.S.C. § 552a (1982).

121. 44 U.S.C. § 3501-19 (Supp. IV 1980).

122. Development of an OMB [Office of Management and Budget] Policy Circular on Federal Information Management; Solicitation of Public Comment, 48 Fed. Reg. 40,964 (1983).

government information as a public good which should be available to everyone and may be concerned about a developing national information policy that places too much emphasis on the commercial value of information at the expense of public needs.

The proper balancing of public, private, and commercial interests in a centralized national information policy may not be possible or even desirable.<sup>123</sup> But the competing interests should, nevertheless, be considered and balanced before access to particular types of government information is granted or withdrawn. The data held in legislative information systems is not related to the conflict between public and private interests, because legislators are unlikely to claim a right to privacy for their voting records. The public's right to know, however, could conflict with the commercial sector's right to compete fairly in the marketplace. For example, if Congress's bill status system, LEGIS, were freely available to the public, many of those who subscribe to the commercial Legi-slate system might cancel their subscriptions and the company could be forced out of business. On the other hand, commercial vendors, if forced to compete with the government, might be stimulated to provide even more enhancements to their information product. These commercial vendors have the same potential for survival as the commercial publishers whose publications have long competed with the more traditional printed publications of the government. To compete fairly, however, the government may need to assess a user fee sufficient to meet its costs.<sup>124</sup> If computer-based information is treated in the same manner as other government information, this fee should meet actual costs to the same degree that printed information sold by the Government Printing Office does. Users of government information—whether they are members of the public or commercial publishers—should not have to share in the costs of developing government databases.

## B. Other Issues

Secondary issues which arise regarding access to legislative information systems include: (1) the applicability of freedom of information laws to system data, (2) the extent to which equal access to system data can be provided to the public without interfering with legislative use, and (3) the legislatures' ability to secure confidential data from outside access and tampering.

### 1. Freedom of Information

Although all fifty states and the federal government have enacted freedom of information laws,<sup>125</sup> these laws may not be appropriate vehicles for gaining access to legislative information system data. First, only a minority of these acts are ap-

---

123. The pros and cons of a centralized federal information policy are analyzed in CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, 97TH CONG., 2D SESS., THE INFORMATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1981, at 19-22, 25-30 (Comm. Print 1982).

124. Costs here refer to costs of access, not costs of development. Lower costs could encourage the commercial sector to add value to the government product and then distribute the product on a wider scale. See Hayes, *Politics and Publishing in Washington: Are Our Needs Being Met in the 80s?*, 74 SPECIAL LIBR. 322, 330 (1983).

125. For a compilation of these laws, see U.S. SENATE, COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, SUBCOMM. ON ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE, 95TH CONG., 2D SESS., FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: A COMPILATION OF STATE LAWS 1-24, 299-475 (Comm. Print 1978). For summaries of the state laws and the full text of the federal act, see 1 GOV'T DISCLOSURE (P-H) ¶ 30,001 (Sept. 13, 1983).

plicable to the legislatures.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, in most jurisdictions, amendments might be required to broaden the scope of such acts. Second, agencies are generally given a period of time in which to respond to a request—ten days under the federal act.<sup>127</sup> This delay may make the information less useful. Because much of the value of bill status information lies in its timeliness, even a short delay in response time may be too long. In some states the freedom of information legislation might be successfully employed for opening up the legislative information system to outside users. The legislatures, however, have to be convinced that expanding access to legislative information is in their interest, political or otherwise, so that they do not continue to exempt legislative systems from freedom of information coverage.

## 2. Quality of Service and Equal Access

Administrators responsible for legislative databases have expressed concern that expanded access could adversely affect the quality of service that the legislative systems have been able to provide to their primary users, the legislators.<sup>128</sup> In jurisdictions where outside users have been permitted access to the systems, service to the legislature has been protected. In Oregon and Illinois—jurisdictions which lead in allowing outside user access—the legislatures have adopted guidelines that proscribe outside user access when access would result in diminished service to the legislature.<sup>129</sup> In both states, although the number of outside users has steadily increased, diminished service to the legislatures has not been reported.<sup>130</sup> Similar legislative guidelines could be adopted by other states if decreased service to the legislatures is a concern.

A related issue is the extent to which equal access to machine-readable data can be provided to the public. An individual can use government information in print format without special equipment. Consequently, this information can be made readily available on an equal basis to most interested members of the public. On the other hand, information available only in machine-readable form, such as the 1980 census data, may be too expensive for individuals to purchase and may require sophisticated computer hardware to use.<sup>131</sup> In the case of legislative information systems, database access generally requires an all-purpose (dumb) computer terminal with a communications capability. Although such terminals are becoming increasingly commonplace, this additional hardware requirement can and does present an obstacle to truly equal access.

The equal access issue can be resolved by providing public access through existing state and federal depository library programs.<sup>132</sup> This access is consistent with

---

126. In 1978, only 11 states had freedom of information acts that applied to the legislative branch as well as to the executive branch of government. See Ellsworth, *D.C. Freedom of Information Act*, 2 DISTRICT LAW. 49, 51 (1978).

127. 5 U.S.C. § 552(6)(A)(i) (1982).

128. Eubanks interview, *supra* note 24.

129. One of the conditions for outside user access, set by statute in Illinois, is that "such availability in no way reduces the quality of service available to and required under this Act for legislative users." ILL. REV. STAT. ch. 63, § 42.16(a) (1981).

130. Telephone interview with Chris Herndon, Assistant Director of the Oregon Legislative Information System (Mar. 8, 1984); telephone interview with Walter Kesselman, Director of the Illinois Legislative Information System (Mar. 9, 1984).

131. See Hacker, *supra* note 115.

132. See Depository Library Council materials, *supra* note 50.

the movement to treat government information held in machine-readable form like printed information. The government could permit members of the public free access to this information at terminals located in depository libraries just as the public now freely uses other government publications. System data, like other machine-readable information, might otherwise be totally unavailable to the public. Thus, the reasons for distributing machine-readable information through depository library systems are even more compelling than the reasons for making traditional publications available.

### 3. Security

Another concern of system administrators is the potential for outside users to retrieve and manipulate confidential data.<sup>133</sup> Categories of confidential data likely to appear in legislative information systems include casework data relating to individual constituents; political data, such as contributors lists and mailing lists; committee and subcommittee data, such as legislative planning data and privileged hearing data; and debate-supporting data, such as privileged information for use in preparing debate documentation. Simple security precautions, however, can be taken to protect confidential data without completely barring outside users from the system.<sup>134</sup> These precautions include the use of passwords and special terminals to gain access to files holding confidential information, permitting most terminals access to only nonconfidential files. Because statute and bill status files do not include confidential data, these files could be freely accessed while, at the same time, simple security measures would protect confidential files.

## V. CONCLUSION

The computerized information systems developed to support Congress and most of the state legislatures include statutory and bill status data files that are potentially quite useful for legal research. Access policies are not uniform, and the restrictions on outside user access adopted by many system administrators are not justifiable.

The information in these systems should be treated like other government information and made available to the public when competing interests do not outweigh the public's right to know. Competing interests include the individual's right to privacy and the commercial sector's right to compete fairly in the marketplace. Individual privacy rights, however, are generally not relevant to the data files under consideration. Even with the recent priority given to commercial interests at the federal level, the public's interest should prevail over the commercial sector's right to compete. In some areas, such as online statutory retrieval systems, there are no commercial competitors. In other areas, such as online bill status systems, commercial vendors could enhance the government product in order to achieve a fair share of the marketplace. More current and comprehensive data and lower user fees would certainly improve the currently available commercial systems. In any event, taxpayer users should not be forced to pay twice for the development of the same system.

The success of the jurisdictions that allow outside user access demonstrates that the other reasons advanced by system administrators for restricting access are also unjustified. Simple security precautions prevent outside users from retrieving or

---

133. STATE LEGISLATURE USE, *supra* note 4, at 56.

134. *Id.*

tampering with confidential data. Likewise, simple procedures for granting outside user access can assure priority for legislative use.

Access and dissemination of legislative information system data should be treated, as much as possible, like government information issued in more traditional formats. Outside user access should be available at cost, and the government should provide free access through existing depository library systems. Achieving this goal through the enforcement of existing legislation, such as freedom of information acts, may not be possible. Consequently, interested parties may have to lobby their legislators to enact additional affirmative legislation providing for access by libraries and other users.



**APPENDIX 1**  
**State Legislatures That Have Automated Information Systems\***

STATE	CURRENT BILL STATUS	STATUTES
Alabama	X	X
Alaska	X	X
Arizona	X	
California	X	
Colorado	X	
Connecticut	X	X
Delaware		X
Florida	X	
Georgia	X	
Hawaii	X	X
Idaho	X	X
Illinois	X	X
Indiana	X	
Iowa	X	X
Kansas	X	X
Kentucky		X
Louisiana	X	X
Maine	X	
Maryland	X	X
Massachusetts	X	X
Michigan	X	X
Minnesota	X	X
Mississippi	X	X
Missouri	X	X
Montana	X	X
Nebraska	X	X
Nevada		X
New Hampshire	X	
New Jersey	X	
New Mexico	X	X
New York	X	X
North Carolina	X	
North Dakota	X	X
Ohio	X	X
Oklahoma	X	X
Oregon	X	X
Pennsylvania	X	X
Rhode Island	X	X
South Carolina	X	
South Dakota	X	X
Tennessee	X	
Texas	X	X
Utah	X	X
Vermont		X
Virginia	X	X
Washington	X	X
West Virginia	X	X
Wisconsin	X	X
Wyoming	X	X

\* Information obtained from a survey by the author.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**State Legislatures' Direct Access Policies\***

STATE	LEGISLATURE USE ONLY	STATE AGENCIES USE	OTHER
Alabama	X		
Alaska			Anyone with state approval
Arizona	X		
California	X		
Colorado	X		
Connecticut	X		
Delaware	X		
Florida			Anyone for a fee
Georgia		X	
Hawaii		X	
Idaho	X		
Illinois		Limited access	
Indiana	X		
Iowa	X		
Kansas			Anyone for a fee
Kentucky	X		
Louisiana			Anyone for a fee
Maine			One public ter- minal in capitol building
Maryland	X		
Massachusetts	X		
Michigan	X		
Minnesota	X		
Mississippi		X	
Missouri		X	Public terminals in capitol building
Montana		X	Municipal govern- ments
Nebraska		X	
Nevada	X		
New Hampshire		X	
New Jersey	X		
New Mexico	X		
New York			Anyone for a fee
North Carolina	X		
North Dakota			Anyone with compatible equip- ment
Ohio	X		
Oklahoma	X		
Oregon			Anyone for a fee
Pennsylvania	X		
Rhode Island	X		
South Carolina	X		
South Dakota	X		
Tennessee	X		

\* Information obtained from a survey by the author.

STATE	LEGISLATURE USE ONLY	STATE AGENCIES USE	OTHER
Texas	X		
Utah			Anyone for a fee
Vermont	X		
Virginia			Anyone with compatible equip- ment
Washington		Limited access	
West Virginia	X		
Wisconsin	X		
Wyoming	X		

### APPENDIX 3

#### States Which Will Perform Searches for Outside Users\*

STATE	PHONE NUMBER	FEE
Alabama	205-261-3036 (House) 205-261-3195 (Senate)	For copies only
Arizona	602-255-4221 602-255-3032	
California	916-445-4965	
Colorado	303-866-2340 303-866-3055	
Delaware	302-736-4131	No policy yet
Florida	800-342-1827 (Florida citizens only)	
Georgia	404-656-5015 (House) 404-656-5040 (Senate)	
Hawaii	808-548-4262	
Idaho	208-334-3175	
Illinois	217-782-6625	
Indiana	317-232-9856	
Kansas	913-296-2321	No policy yet
Louisiana	504-342-2434	
Maine	207-289-3021	
Maryland	301-841-3810	
Massachusetts	617-722-2356	
Michigan	517-373-0170	
Minnesota	612-296-2868	Yes
Mississippi	601-359-1395	
Missouri	314-751-4223	
Montana	406-444-3064	Yes, price depends on service needed
Nebraska	402-471-2221	
Nevada	702-885-5649	
New Hampshire	603-271-2239	
New Mexico	505-984-9550	No policy yet
New York	By contract only	\$2,500 per year
North Carolina	919-733-7779	
North Dakota	701-224-4261	Depends on complexity of search

\* Information obtained from a survey by the author.

STATE	PHONE NUMBER	FEE
Ohio	614-466-8842	
Oklahoma	405-521-3134	
Oregon	800-452-7813 (Session) 503-378-8551 (Interim)	
Pennsylvania	717-787-7358	Yes, price depends on service needed
Rhode Island	401-277-3580	
South Dakota	605-773-3251	Charge for actual computer time
Tennessee	615-741-3511	
Texas	512-475-3026 (Session) 512-475-4626 (Interim)	
Utah	801-533-5481	Yes, price depends on size of search
Virginia	804-786-6530	
Washington	206-753-6804	Yes
West Virginia	304-348-2040	Yes, price depends on size of search
Wisconsin	608-266-0341	
Wyoming	307-777-7801	Yes, price depends on size of search

#### APPENDIX 4

##### State Legislative Information Systems Contacts\*

###### Alabama

Louis Greene, Director  
Legislative Reference Service  
State Capitol  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
205-832-3496

###### Alaska

Mary Jo Sanders  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99811  
907-465-3858

###### Arizona

Jane Richards, Chief Clerk  
Chief Clerk's Office  
State Capitol  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
602-255-3032

###### Arkansas

Marcus Halbrook, Director  
Bureau of Legislative Research  
State Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-371-1937

###### California

Bill Bank, Coordinator of Legislative  
Information Systems  
Legislative Data Center  
1100 J Street  
Suite 650  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-445-4965

###### Colorado

Richard Stansbury, Director of State Services  
Public Systems Associates, Inc.  
770 Grant Street, Suite 200  
Denver, CO 80203  
303-831-1260

###### Connecticut

Nicholas E. Tommassone, Data Processing  
Director  
Joint Committee on Legislative Management  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106  
203-566-2802

###### Delaware

McDonald Coker, Assistant Director  
Office of Legislative Counsel  
Legislative Hall  
Dover, DE 19901  
302-736-5801

\* Information obtained from a survey by the author.

**Florida**

Bunny Van Brunt, Director  
Legislative Information Division  
Joint Legislative Management Committee  
Room 94, Holland Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32034  
904-488-4372

**Georgia**

Cynthia C. Thompson, Research Director  
316 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
404-656-5000

**Hawaii**

Charles Mishimura, Assistant Director  
Legislative Information Systems Office  
State Capitol Building, Room 007  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
808-548-4262

**Idaho**

Mardee Wyman, Administrator  
Data Center  
State Capitol  
Boise, ID 83720  
208-334-3175

**Illinois**

Walter Kesselman, Director  
Legislative Information System  
577 Lincoln Tower Plaza  
Springfield, IL 62706  
217-782-3944

**Indiana**

Sue Page, Director  
Legislative Services Agency  
302 State House  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-9856

**Iowa**

Joe O'Hern, Chief Clerk  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
515-281-5381

**Kansas**

Mary Ching, Computer Information  
Specialist  
Office of Revisor of Statutes  
State House  
Topeka, KS 66612  
913-296-2321

**Kentucky**

Danny Jackson, Manager  
Legislative Research Commission  
State Capitol  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
502-564-8100, ext. 413

**Louisiana**

Jerry Stringer, Director  
House Computer System  
P. O. Box 44486  
State Capitol  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804  
504-342-2407

**Maine**

David Silsby, Director of Legislative Research  
Office of Legislative Research  
State House  
Augusta, ME 04330  
207-289-2101

**Maryland**

Barbara Basil, Supervisor  
Computer Division  
Department of Legislative Reference  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
301-841-3787

**Massachusetts**

Henry Szymura, Director  
Legislative Data Processing  
Room 208, State House  
Boston, MA 02133  
617-722-2634

**Michigan**

Dennis Huber, Manager  
Legislative Information Systems  
Legislative Service Bureau  
125 West Allegan, Third Floor  
Lansing, MI 48913  
517-373-0170

**Minnesota**

Harry Walsh, Deputy Revisor  
Revisor of Statutes  
Three State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
612-296-2868

**Missouri**

Betty Mueller, Information Clerk  
Revisor of Statutes  
Committee on Legislative Research  
Room 117A, Capitol Building  
Jefferson, MO 65101  
314-751-4223

**Montana**

Diana Dowling, Executive Director  
Legislative Council  
Room 138, State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620  
406-444-3064

**Nebraska**

Steve Henderson, Information Center Manager  
Applications Information Center  
Room 1505, State Capitol Building  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
402-471-2065

**Nevada**

Frank W. Daykin, Legislative Counsel  
Legislative Counsel Bureau  
Legislative Building  
Carson City, NV 89710  
702-885-5627

**New Hampshire**

Carl A. Peterson, Clerk of House  
State House  
Concord, NH 03301  
603-271-2548

**New Jersey**

Beverly Schrum, Supervisor  
Information Service  
Office of Legislative Services  
Division of Legislative Information & Research  
New Jersey State Legislature, Room 103  
State House Annex CN042  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-4661

**New Mexico**

Diana Vigil, Office Manager  
Legislative Finance Committee  
Santa Fe, NM 87503  
505-984-9550

**New York**

David Keiper, Commissioner  
New York State Legislative Bill Drafting  
Committee  
Room 7194, Motor Vehicle Building, Core 2  
Albany, NY 12224  
518-455-9333

**North Carolina**

Terry Sullivan, Director of Research  
General Assembly of North Carolina  
2129 State Legislative Building  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
919-733-2578

**North Dakota**

Fran Ely, Data Processing Coordinator  
Legislative Data Processing Division  
Legislative Council  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
701-224-4261

**Ohio**

David A. Johnson, Director  
Ohio Legislative Services Commission  
State House  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-466-3615

**Oklahoma**

Heidi Wiloughby, Data Processing Coordinator  
Legislative Council  
4-K Capitol Building  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
405-521-3134

**Oregon**

Dale Claudel, Director  
Oregon Legislative Information System  
S401 State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97310  
503-378-8194

**Pennsylvania**

Richard E. Campbell, Executive Director  
Legislative Data Processing Center  
State Capitol  
Senate Box 64  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
717-787-7358

**Rhode Island**

James Hackett, Director  
Legislative Data Systems  
State House, Room One  
Providence, RI 02903  
401-277-3580

**South Carolina**

Charles T. McKinney, Director  
Legislative Information Systems of General  
Assembly  
1105 Pendleton Street, Suite 112  
Columbia, SC 29201  
803-758-5888

**South Dakota**

Tom Vickerman, Co-Counsel  
Legislative Research Council  
State Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-3251

**Tennessee**

Barbara Langley, Director  
Office of Legislative Services  
G-3 State Capitol  
Nashville, TN 37219  
615-741-3511

**Texas**

Gary Sitz, Manager  
Information Center  
Data Processing Division  
Legislative Council  
P.O. Box 12128, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
512-475-2805

**Utah**

Jane Peterson, Information Coordinator  
Office of General Legislative Council  
436 State Capitol  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114  
801-533-6581

**Vermont**

Del Goulette, Operations Manager  
Legislative Council  
State House  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
802-282-2231

**Virginia**

Mary Beth Tomlin, Information Officer  
Legislative Information  
House of Delegates  
P. O. Box 406  
Richmond, VA 23203  
804-746-5431

**Washington**

Edward C. Miller, Coordinator  
Code Revisors Office  
Legislative Building  
Mail Stop AS-15  
Olympia, WA 98504  
206-753-6804

**West Virginia**

Carla Dyer, CRT Supervisor  
Legislative Services  
E-132 State Capitol  
Charleston, WV 25305  
304-348-2040

**Wisconsin**

Clark Radatz, Research Analyst  
Reference Section  
Legislative Reference Bureau  
201 North State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702  
608-266-0341

**Wyoming**

Ralph E. Thomas, Director  
Legislative Service Office  
Room 213, State Capitol  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
307-777-7881